

THREE COUNT

Professional Wrestling Newsletter
by Alex Marvez

Volume 1, Number 4

September 30, 1991

WWF SETS NEW PAY-PER-VIEW DATE: JUSTICE TO PREVAIL?

In a move that has shocked the wrestling world, the World Wrestling Federation has announced plans for a pay-per-view show only six days after its Survivor Series PPV card. The reason behind this is even more startling: it appears **Sid Justice** is going to become the WWF champion.

The newly-announced show, which is currently untitled, will emanate from the Hemisfair in San Antonio, Texas on Dec. 3. A line-up for the two-hour show has not been announced. The telecast subscription will cost \$12.95.

On November 27, the annual Survivor Series takes place from Joe Louis Arena in Detroit. **Hulk Hogan vs. The Undertaker** is the main event, with the top two undercard Survivor matches (four-on-four elimination tag-team matches) as **Justice-Big Boss Man-Legion of Doom vs. Jake Roberts-Irwin R. Shyster-Natural Disasters** and **Ric Flair-Ted DiBiase-The Mountie-The Warlord vs. Virgil-Roddy Piper-Ted DiBiase-British Bulldog**. **Dave Meltzer** of *The Wrestling Observer Newsletter* reports the other two Survivor matches are **The Rockers-Bushwhackers vs. Nasty Boys-Beverly Brothers** and **Jim Duggan-Jim Neidhart-Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat-"Texas Tornado" Kerry Von Erich vs. The Berserker-Skinner-Big Bully Busick-Colonel Mustafa**.

Reportedly, Hogan will lose the title to The 'Taker at Survivors, with Justice defeating Taker at this new pay-per-view show. The reasoning is Hogan has a guaranteed big-money feud with Flair regardless of whether he holds the WWF title. Justice, thus far, has been a flop at the box office (although it isn't his fault). WWF owner **Vince McMahon** wants to make Justice his champion of the future, and with the WWF suffering money woes, now is the perfect time.

Yes, the WWF reportedly lost money last year and is expecting a money-crunch in January. To prevent that, the group is promoting the Dec. 3 PPV show. The WWF laid off 26 front-office employees last Monday (no major names among them).

Why would the WWF, which has claimed the outrageous figure of \$500,000 million as its gross annual income, be suffering from financial woes? Thank McMahon's pet project, the World Bodybuilding Federation. McMahon doubled the salary of body-builders working for Joe Weider, the sports' guru, and is now feeling the pinch. McMahon has only run one WBF show (which lost well over \$250,000), their *Bodybuilding Lifestyles* magazine has been a flop and nothing has been done to promote the body builders after their June contest. McMahon also signed **Lou Ferrigno** to a whopping \$780,000 a year contract.

WWF spokesman Steve Planamenta said the PPV shows will not have a tie in with
(Continued on Page 6)

LETTERS

Dear Alex:

What is Ric Flair's real name? Personal information on him would be of interest to me. Like, what did he do before becoming a pro wrestler? Are there any Flair fan clubs? I've enjoyed the *Three Count Newsletter* I thought the second edition was put together better than the first one. Maybe in your spotlight section you could highlight one wrestler a week with some personal information.

-- Rita Kent, Mill Spring, N.C.

AM: Flair's real name is **Richard Fleihr**. He is 42 years old, was born in Minneapolis and is currently residing in Charlotte, N.C. He is married and has (to my knowledge) two children. Before entering wrestling, Flair was an offensive lineman at the University of Minnesota for two years. He broke into wrestling in 1973 at a school run by former American Wrestling Association owner Verne Gagne.

Flair's road to stardom began in **Jim Crockett's** Mid-Atlantic wrestling promotion in the mid-1970s. Flair survived a plane crash in 1976, where he sustained a broken neck, and returned to become the only eight-time National Wrestling Alliance championship (if you count his loss and recapturing of the title against **Tatsumi Fujinami** last March and May, which the NWA does). Flair's father was a gynecologist, and both his folks are still alive. I am unaware of any Flair fan clubs, but if any readers are aware of one, please let me know.

Also, I will begin featuring the careers of wrestlers in my spotlight section beginning in October. Please write in with any requests.

Dear Alex:

1) Does Crockett Promotions plan to resume operations? If not, who has the copyright to the name "NWA?"

2) There has been a lot of talk in WCW about their junior heavyweight tournament.

But whatever happened to **Lazertron**, the former NWA junior champion who never lost the title?

THREE COUNT/Page 2

3) In WCW, whatever happened to the rule limiting the number of saves a tag-team partner can make for his partner during a match?

4) Where is **Jimmy Valiant**? **Bobby Duncam**? **Lee Scott**?

-- Mark Cope, Union, S.C.

AM: 1) When WCW purchased Jim Crockett promotions in 1988, Crockett was given a job in the group's front office, which he still retains today. As discussed last issue, the NWA name is now under control of Jim Herd, and will probably be mentioned again on WCW telecasts after a 10-month ban.

2) Lazertron was **Hector Guerrero**, who left the NWA sometime in 1988 with the junior heavyweight title no one cared about. Guerrero wrestles sporadically in Mexico today. He was the Gobbeldy-Gooker when that dreadful gimmick popped up last year at the Survivor Series.

3) I could never remember that rule in existence, although as the storyline used to go, the referee had the power to disqualify a tag-team for flagrant violation of the rule. In today's wrestling product, the referee is merely part of the act, not an official. Any air of legitimacy was erased a long time ago by wrestlers never being disqualified for rule violations and wrestling announcers no longer attempting to get across the parameters of the referee's job.

4) Valiant is still wrestling in Memphis. I understand he's lost a lot of weight and tattooed most of his entire body, including one on his stomach that says, "Come to Papa." Duncam is out of wrestling and is a real estate agent in Texas. Scott is a semi-regular referee for WCW, and does stunt work for movies and television shows.

Three Counts a professional wrestling newsletter published four times a month. Price for subscription is \$6 for one month, \$18 for three months, \$33 for six months and \$66 for one year. Please address all subscription checks to Three Count and send them to P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, Fla., 32604-0795. Please include name, age, address and phone number.

Results

Suncoast Pro Wrestling held a television taping Sept. 28 before a crowd of 350 fans at the Manatee County Civic Center in Palmetto, Fla. The following is a breakdown of the five 30-minute shows that will air weekly until Nov. 9. There is more on Suncoast in our Spotlight section on Page 5.

Show 1: Penelope Paradise defeated Tina Heartbreak in a one-sided match. After the show, Penelope announced she had sold the contracts of The Giant Outlaw and Charlie Fields to Grizzly Bear Ray. That duo preceded to defeat Kenny Kendall and Ion Weston (two WCW jobbers) in the semifinals of a tournament to determine the first Suncoast tag-team champions. Jim "The Animal" Cooper (using the George Steele gimmick) then defeated Rick Thames.

Show 2: I believe this begins with a demonstration of submission maneuvers (will be explained further in a future issue) with Jerry Flynn (who has a ton of potential) and Charlie Anderson. The Masked Superstar (Bob Cook) began mocking the demonstration, especially the final hold -- a crooked head scissors. Believe me, in real life, that hold is a killer. Flynn and Superstar ended up having an impromptu match, with 'Star cheap-shotting Flynn and running away.

Then came an interview with Boris Malenko, who was carrying a paddle to spank Paradise with. Penelope came out and, while she was distracted with Boris, Debbie Drake came out of the locker room with a Malenko jacket (Debbie wrestles as Debbie Malenko in Japan). Debbie proceeded to throw Penelope into a small steel cage at ringside, which is where she remained until her match with Debbie later in the show).

Show 3: Flynn squashed "Mr. Everything" Dave Johnson, Gator Gillmore and Vern Henderson defeated Tom Sawyer and Tom Starr to reach the tag-team tourney finals, and Jumbo Baretta won the Suncoast Florida title by forcing The Superstar to submit to a crooked head scissors (yes, a clean submission in the U.S.). The fans didn't know how to react when the match was over, but cheered pretty wildly when they realized Baretta had won.

Show 4: Highlight was Henderson and Gillmore defeating Fields and Outlaw for the

THREE COUNT/Page 3

Suncoast straps. After the match, the losing team reacted as all angry losing teams do -- they shanghaied the winners and left them laying.

Show 5: This half-hour, I've been told, is a must see for tape collectors. It features a 17-minute brawl between Penelope and Debbie that was simply fantastic. Both bled (legitimately) and brawled throughout the Civic Center. Penelope won via disqualification. The two will be matched up again when Drake returns from Japan in early December. By the way, Debbie will be a superstar in wrestling sometime real soon.

Notes: Suncoast is offering *Three Count* readers two free tickets to its October 26 show at the Manatee County Civic Center. For tickets, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Henry Raines at 5748 14 Street West, Bradenton, FL 34207.

I'm looking for any results and/or analysis of any live matches Three Count readers attend. Please send all correspondence to P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, FL 32604-0795.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Juan Carlos Blanco of 2765 SW 19th Street, Miami, FL, 33145-1919, is looking for anyone with old video tape of matches from Georgia or Florida.

Carlos Rey of 996 W. 45th Place, Hialeah, FL, 33012, is looking to trade for wrestling tapes from Puerto Rico and Portland. He has old and current Mexican wrestling tapes and some old Florida footage in exchange.

Rita Kent of 100 Kelly Lane, Mill Spring N.C., 28756, is interested in any Ric Flair memorabilia, especially photographs.

Desire any wrestling memorabilia? Interested in video tape of old matches or from other parts of the country? Send your request to Three Count at P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, Fla., 32604-0795.

The first **Ric Flair-Roddy Piper** match took place last Monday in Wheeling, W.V., as a dark (non-televised) match on a WWF television taping. Flair pinned Piper with his feet on the ropes for leverage in what was described as an above-average bout. Piper and Flair also wrestled the next night in Huntington, W.V., but no word on the outcome. Piper and Flair begin wrestling on the road full time in October, with their first road match scheduled for Oct. 18 in Kalamazoo, Mich.

In a move that sounds bigger than it is, **Randy Savage** and **The Rockers** have given notice to the WWF. That doesn't mean they are leaving the promotion, let alone jumping to World Championship Wrestling. But in the WWF's two-year contracts, there are only certain times when a wrestler can give his 13-week notice (the length of the notice permits the WWF to "bury" the wrestler before he leaves). For example, **Ted DiBiase** was set to jump to WCW two years ago and attempted to give notice to **Vince McMahon** in September. McMahon, however, showed DiBiase his contract, which said he only had the opportunity to give notice during three separate months in his contract. So DiBiase had to stay put. Savage is almost definitely staying (I don't know about wrestling), while I figure the same is true for The Rockers.

With the WWF only running one card nightly in the United States until **Hulk Hogan** returns to a full-time schedule Oct. 25, most of the promotion's stars are on a tour of Europe. The WWF's five shows in England have all sold out, while the show in Barcelona is doing well and Paris poorly. Flair will wrestle **Tito "El Matador" Santana** and **Kerry Von Erich** on the tour.

As evident on television, **Sergeant Slaughter** is beginning to turn good. Expect the scenario to be drawn out until late November, which is when Sarge is scheduled to return to a full-time wrestling schedule.

World Championship
Wrestling

The battle for the NWA title belt is about to get serious. After speaking this week to **Kip Frye**, WCW's legal counsel, I'm more certain than ever WCW is going to do everything they can to get that belt. I have mixed emotions on the subject. Everything Flair has done with the belt has put WCW in a positive light. And if the result of the first Flair-Piper match is an indication of what is to happen around the country, WCW's best will come off looking good in "the major leagues." On the other hand, I can see the day Hogan defeats Flair, wins the title and proceeds to defame and destroy it. I just wonder, though, if Flair even needs the belt now. With WCW is willing to waste all sorts of money to get it back, couldn't the WWF just make a duplicate of it? Or do an angle where **Bobby Heenan** says the belt isn't good enough for a champion the caliber of Flair and they make a bigger belt? Or a replica of the WWF title? And who's to say the belt isn't Flair's anyway?

Scott Steiner was on **Jim Ross'** radio show last Sunday night. Steiner's triceps seems to be healing fine, but he sustained a 10-17-inch cut (not sure how long) in a chainsaw accident a few weeks back. I understand Steiner will wrestle in the Chamber of Horrors match at Halloween Havoc if he can get his doctor's clearance.

I understand WCW was bandying about the idea of signing **Jesse Ventura** to announce at Havoc and other WCW clashes and PPV shows. Don't expect anything to come out of this, though.

WCW's World Wide Wrestling show in Miami on WSVN (Channel 7) has been moved from noon Saturdays to 6 a.m. Sundays. The move was done because WSVN is switching to a more "serious" line of programming on Saturday afternoons.

SPOTLIGHT ON...
SUNCOAST PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING

What: **Henry Raines'** independent wrestling circuit that has been operating for more than two years. The group uses talent living on the west coast of Florida, and is the only American promotion that stresses women's and submission-style wrestling (a combination of amateur wrestling, kick boxing and wrestling, where the holds are much more realistic than a pro match and can legitimately break bones). Most of the wrestlers have worked as preliminary performers at World Championship Wrestling television tapings, but this group gives them an outlet to show more. Some of the real good ones (**Debbie Drake, Jumbo Baretta, Jerry Flynn**) also wrestle in Japan, where they have more name recognition.

Where: Suncoast tapes its shows monthly at the Manatee County Civic Center, and runs shows mostly on the west coast of Florida.

When: The show can be seen on WBSU in Sarasota (Channel 62) on Saturdays at 8:30 a.m. and on WTTA (Channel 38) in Tampa on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. and Sundays at 4 p.m. Henry is also selling a tape of three Suncoast shows for \$17.50. Write for more information at 5748 14 Street West, Bradenton, FL 34207.

Who's hot?: One thing that makes Suncoast unique is the focus on a woman as its top performer. And with **Penelope Paradise** as the top gun, that's not a bad move to make. Her interviews are hilarious (although she needs some polishing, which will come in time) and her ring work is dandy. The top male performers are **The Masked Superstar (Bob Cook)** and **Jumbo Baretta**. Cook is really an unsung hero in the business, while Baretta is very good at the submission-style. The most underrated performer in the group is "**Big V**" **Vern Henderson**. He's got a big, non-steroid like physique and can really wrestle for a guy that's 6-3 and new to the business. Shooting-style wrestler **Jerry Flynn** also has great potential. It's great to see **Boris Malenko** on any television set, and he's treated with respect and dignity on the show (as well he should). Matches are usually competitive.

Who's not?: The television production is bad, but with a low-cost budget, that's understandable. However, there is no feel on the shows that this is a Suncoast card. There are no banners, and the announcing table looks like its from a high school gymnasium. It is also located almost right next to the ring. A small portable studio should be set up, and the barricaded areas of the Civic Center should be decorated. Fans should also be forced to sit in the seats in front of the main camera. Raines is also the television announcer. He's not bad at calling the action, but often runs out of things to say, leaving dead air. Many of the matches go too long, but that's how many independents are. But, many of the guest announcers and Raines are putting over angles from other matches while there is a bout in the ring. None of the wrestlers are all that bad.

Outlook: Suncoast has a good group of wrestlers that, frankly, aren't going to be headlining the WWF or WCW anytime soon. However, that's good for Raines, who has a stable base of good-to-very good wrestlers (Cook, Baretta, Paradise) to build around. Should Raines improve the quality of his television product and syndicate it better, I truly believe this group could find success promoting in Florida.

WWF PAY-PER-VIEW

(Continued From Page 1)

each other (i.e. the new show will not feature the conclusion to the Survivor's card).

"This is an experiment," Planamenta said. "We're not going to spend one cent in advertising. The only people who are going to know about this are those who buy Survivor Series and tune in to our television shows the weekend of Nov 30."

Don't expect this new PPV show to do all that well, though. I can only foresee true hardcore fans shilling out more money for this new show. There may also be some who decide not to spend \$24.95 on Survivors in favor of seeing a less-expensive show six days later. Historically, Survivors has never been a hot-selling card for Titan Sports (even though it's one of my favorites), and I don't think the fact this year's show is on a Wednesday night will help. Starrcade '89 drew a disappointing 1.3 buy rate from a potential audience of 13 million when telecast on a Wednesday night, and World Championship Wrestling was doing boffo television ratings then. And, believe it or not, some fans may actually skip the Dec. 3 pay-per-view show in favor of WCW's Starrcade '91 in late December (which will probably be headlined by **Lex Luger vs. Sting**).

The choice of Justice as champion is also questionable, because his track record was awful in WCW. After sustaining a punctured lung in a match with **Scott Steiner** in November of 1989, Justice took more than eight months off and received full benefits from his guaranteed WCW contract. While he may not have been ready to return to the ring, most wrestlers feel Justice was merely relaxing, playing softball and taking advantage of the admiration of WCW executive vice president **Jim Herd** (Herd wanted to make Justice WCW champion, an offer Sid turned down last April to jump to the WWF). Justice's wrestling skill is very limited (yes, even by WWF standards). Plus, a source close to WCW said Justice was unhappy upon arriving in the WWF and began renegotiating with WCW (although everything appears to be patched up). Do fans want to see another muscle-bound wrestler as WWF champion?

NEXT ISSUE: The **BIG** story will be in next week's issue for sure. I'm happy I'm back on a regular printing schedule. **This is the last issue for September so if one-month subscribers have not resubscribed, please do so.** I'm not sure of next week's spotlight section yet, but I'll make it interesting. Plus, as usual, all the top news in pro wrestling. See ya' in seven days.

Three Count Newsletter
P.O. Box 12795
Gainesville, FL 32604-0795